

Message Text

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ACTION AF-10

INFO OCT-01 EUR-12 IO-13 ISO-00 CIAE-00 DODE-00 PM-04
H-01 INR-07 L-03 NSAE-00 NSC-05 PA-01 PRS-01
SP-02 SS-15 USIA-06 AID-05 ACDA-07 TRSE-00 EB-07
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R 122010Z MAY 77
FM AMEMBASSY ABIDJAN
TO SECSTATE WASHDC 3487
INFO AMEMBASSY BANGUI
AMEMBASSY BUJUMBURA
AMEMBASSY KIGALI
AMEMBASSY KINSHASA
AMEMBASSY LIBREVILLE
AMEMBASSY LONDON
AMEMBASSY PARIS
AMEMBASSY YAOUNDE
US MISSION USUN NEW YORK 687

C O N F I D E N T I A L SECTION 1 OF 2 ABIDJAN 4909/1

E.O. 11652: GDS
TAGS: EAID, PFOR, XJ, US
SUBJECT: AF COM CONFERENCE: PANEL CONSENSUS ON CENTRAL AFRICA

SUMMARY: AMBASSADORS RESIDENT IN BURUNDI, CAMEROON, CAE, GABON, RWANDA, AND ZAIRE MET MAY 10 AS AF/C REGIONAL PANEL WITHIN FRAMEWORK OF AF COM CONFERENCE. PRESENT CABLE SUMMARIZES CONSENSUS WHICH EMERGED FROM PANEL SESSION. END SUMMARY.

1. PANEL FOUND THAT AF/C AREA HAS LITTLE INTERNAL SENSE OF "REGIONHOOD." ITS COMPONENT COUNTRIES FALL ESSENTIALLY INTO THREE CATEGORIES: TWO RELATIVELY MODERATE GROUPINGS (EX-FRENCH UDEAC MINUS CONGO-B, EX-BELGIAN TRI-LAKE) PLUS FOUR RADICALS WITHOUT RESIDENT US REPRESENTATION. THESE COMBINE AND RE-COMBINE IN VARYING AFFINITY GROUPS DEPENDING ON ISSUE IN HAND.

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WM YET SOME CONSENSUS EMERGED ON USG APPROACH TO COUNTRIES OF AREA. IF, INDIVIDUALLY, SEVERAL OF THESE STATES ARE OF NO GREAT IMPORTANCE TO US INTERESTS, THEY NONETHELESS REPRESENT COLLECTIVELY A MODERATE GROUPING WITH SOME SENSE OF SHARED INTERESTS AND CONCERNS WHICH WE HAVE AN INTEREST IN STRENGTHENING. THEY ARE POTENTIAL RESOURCE FOR U.S. FOREIGN POLICY WITHIN OAU

AND WITHIN AFRICAN BLOC AT UN AND IN OTHER MULTILATERAL FORA.

3. WE NEED TO MAKE GREATER EFFORT TO ADDRESS OURSELVES TO THIS COLLECTIVITY AND USE IT CONSTRUCTIVELY, AT SAME TIME THAT WE ARE TRYING TO EXTEND OUR TIES AND INFLUENCE WITH MORE RADICAL GROUPING. IN PURSUING LATTER GOAL, WE MUST RECOGNIZE THAT MODERATE PERCEPTION OF OUR PURPOSES IN REACHING OUT TO RADICALS IS NOT WELL UNDERSTOOD, AND WE NEED TO BE SENSITIVE TO MODERATE AS WELL AS RADICAL CONCERNS.

4. PANEL BELIEVES MODERATES (ESPECIALLY WHEN DEFINED ON BASIS OF EXTERNAL POLICIES) DO HAVE A FUTURE. THEY MAY HAVE TO FIGHT FOR THEIR POLITICAL LIVES, AND INTERNAL GOVERNMENT CHANGE WHERE IT OCCURS IS LIKELY TO BE ACCOMPANIED BY PRESSURES TO GO IN MORE RADICAL DIRECTION, BUT THEIR FUTURE IS NOT AS BLEAK AS SOMETIMES SUGGESTED. THUS, THEY ARE WORTH CULTIVATING, THOUGH ALWAYS WITH CAVEAT THAT WE SHOULD AVOID OVERLY-CLOSE IDENTIFICATION WITH PARTICULAR REGIME.

5. US RESPONSIVENESS SHOULD TAKE SEVERAL FORMS -- MOST NOTABLY DIRECT SUPPORT FOR DEVELOPMENT. TO THIS END, MINIMUM AID LEVEL FOR POORER COUNTRIES WOULD BE DESIRABLE AS BASIC MEANS OF DEMONSTRATING US CONCERN FOR DEVELOPMENT OF THESE COUNTRIES; SUCH AID HAS HUMANITARIAN JUSTIFICATION AND WOULD BE RESPONSIVE TO CONGRESSIONAL MANDATE. IF THIS FORMULA NOT POSSIBLE, PANEL SUGGESTED AS ALTERNATIVE SPEEDIER, MORE FLEXIBLE AID RESPONSE TO SMALL-SCALE PROJECTS. AMBASSADOR'S SELF-HELP FUND SHOULD BE EXPANDED AND SUPPLEMENTED BY USE OF AIP, ESPECIALLY FOR PROJECTS IN RANGE OF \$200 - 500,000. CONGRESSIONAL FLEXIBILITY SHOULD BE CONFIDENTIAL

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SOUGHT TO PERMIT INCLUSION OF INFRASTRUCTURE PROJECTS. IN ALL AID EFFORTS, WE SHOULD BE MORE RESPONSIVE TO HOST GOVERNMENT REQUESTS AND THEIR VIEW OF PRIORITIES (WHILE RESERVING ULTIMATE JUDGEMENT TO OURSELVES) AND SHOULD SEEK MAXIMUM COORDINATION WITH OTHER DONORS.

6. ON SECURITY, MODERATES ALL PERCEIVE EXTERNAL THREAT. THEY SEE SOVIETS, CUBANS, RADICALS RUSHING TO FILL AFRICAN POWER VACUUM, AND FAULT US FOR FAILING TO RECOGNIZE AND COUNTER SOVIET AIMS. PANEL DIVIDED ON APPROACH TO REQUESTS FOR ARMS TRANSFER, WITH SOME URGING "GREAT RELUCTANCE" REACTION AND OTHERS RECOMMENDING GREATER SYMPATHY AND PROVISION OF ALTERNATIVE TO SOVIET ARMS. ALL AGREE, HOWEVER, THAT DECISION MUST BE MADE ON SPECIFIC-CASE, COUNTRY-BY-COUNTRY BASIS, APPLYING GENERAL GUIDELINES OF AVOIDING SOPHISTICATED WEAPONS SYSTEMS AND COORDINATING CLOSELY WITH, AND OFTEN ENCOURAGING, OTHER WESTERN COUNTRIES CONCERNED.

7. OTHER FACTOR IN OVERALL RELATIONSHIP WILL BE BROADER US POLICIES ON SOUTHERN AFRICA, NORTH-SOUTH ISSUES. GENERALLY

RESPONSIVE USG POSTURE, ALREADY EVIDENT IN SHIFTS INTRODUCED BY NEW ADMINISTRATION, WILL CONTRIBUTE TO CLIMATE FOR CLOSER COOPERATION ON ISSUES OF CONCERN TO US.

8. GIVEN WILLINGNESS TO BE RESPONSIVE ALONG THESE LINES, USG CAN THEN SEEK TO USE MODERATES IN SUPPORT OF OUR OWN GOALS - BUT WE SHOULD DO SO IN FULL RECOGNITION THAT SUCH EFFORTS RAISE EXPECTATIONS OF QUID PRO QUO. APPROACHES TO THESE GOVERNMENTS SHOULD BE LAID OUT WELL IN ADVANCE OF SCHEDULED VOTE; SHOULD BEGIN WITH SEEKING THEIR VIEWS; SHOULD LEAVE CHOICE OF LEVEL OF APPROACH TO DISCRETION OF POST; AND SHOULD ALWAYS INCLUDE FRENCH TEXTS FOR AIDES-MEMOIRES, DEMARCHES, ETC. EFFORTS ON MULTILATERAL ISSUES MUST FOCUS ON LIMITED NUMBER OF PRIORITY ISSUES; SUPPORT ON THESE CAN BE SOUGHT ON BASIS OF SATISFACTORY OVERALL RELATIONSHIP, BUT EXCESSIVE NUMBER OF APPEALS WILL RAISE THE PRICE. (PARENTHETICAL NOTE THAT HIGH-LEVEL BRIEFING ON US POLICY SHOULD BE OFFERED ONLY IF CONTENT GOES BEYOND WIRELESS FILE OR CONFIDENTIAL

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H-01 INR-07 L-03 NSAE-00 NSC-05 PA-01 PRS-01

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C O N F I D E N T I A L SECTION 2 OF 2 ABIDJAN 4909/2

9. IN DISCUSSION ON ZAIRE, PANEL RECOMMENDED THAT WE CONTINUE TO SUPPORT ZAIRE'S TERRITORIAL INTEGRITY AND UNITY THROUGH MEASURED POLITICAL, ECONOMIC AND SECURITY ASSISTANCE. IN DOING SO, HOWEVER, WE SHOULD SEEK WAYS TO IDENTIFY OURSELVES PUBLICLY WITH THESE PRINCIPLES RATHER THAN WITH SUPPORT OF THE MOBUTU REGIME PER SE, WHOSE LONGER-TERM POLITICAL VIABILITY IS UNCERTAIN AT BEST. WE SHOULD ALSO LINK OUR ASSISTANCE TO ZAIRE'S COMMITMENT TO ECONOMIC REFORM UNDER IMF STABILIZATION AGREEMENT AND TAKE INTO CONSIDERATION GOZ'S RECORD ON HUM RIGHTS (WHICH IS NOT AS BLACK AS COMMONLY PICTURED). WE SHOULD PURSUE OUR PRESENT EFFORTS TO ENCOURAGE BELGIUM AND FRANCE TO PLAY MORE SIGNIFICANT ROLE IN ASSISTANCE FIELD AND TO COORDINATE MORE CLOSELY WITH US.

10. IN COMING MONTHS, WE WILL BE EXPLORING WITH CONGO (B) AND HOPEFULLY WITH ANGOLA NORMALIZATION OF RELATIONS. PANEL EXPRESSED CONFIDENTIAL

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HOPE THAT OUR DISCUSSIONS OF NORMALIZATION CAN BE USED TO ENCOURAGE (A) MODERATION IN DIALOGUE ON SOUTHERN AFRICA WITH FRONT-LINE STATES AND AT MAPUTO CONFERENCE; AND (B) PROGRESS IN ENDING SHABA INCURSION AND PROMOTING NEGOTIATIONS BETWEEN ZAIRE AND ANGOLA. LINKS WITH BOTH COUNTRIES WOULD STRENGTHEN OUR INADEQUATE INFORMATION ON DEVELOPMENTS THERE AND ALSO GIVE US GREATER FLEXIBILITY IN OUR DEALING WITH OTHER AFRICAN STATES.

11. ON HUMAN RIGHTS, AF/C REGION INCLUDES ONE OF WORST OFFENDERS IN EQUATORIAL GUINEA. PANEL CONCURRED WITH PLENARY SUGGESTION THAT EEC BE APPROACHED WITH REQUEST TO CONDITION FED AID ON HUMAN RIGHTS PERFORMANCE IN EG, WITH POSSIBLE FALLBACK ON EUROPEAN HUMAN RIGHTS MACHINERY IF EEC PROVES UNRESPONSIVE. PANEL APPLAUDED SECRETARY'S ATLANTA SPEECH, NOTABLY HIS STRESS ON FLEXIBILITY, AND EXPRESSED HOPE THAT APPLICATION OF POLICY IN THIS AREA WILL GIVE DUE RECOGNITION TO PROBLEMS STEMMING FROM DIFFERING POLITICAL SYSTEMS AND FROM DIFFERING CULTURAL AND HISTORIC BACKGROUNDS.

12. PANEL CONCLUDED WITH DISCUSSION OF VARIOUS OPERATIONAL PROBLEMS. (A) MEMBERS WELCOMED PROMISED REAFFIRMATION OF AMBASSADORIAL AUTHORITY, NOTING IMPORTANCE OF APPLYING THIS AUTHORITY WITH REGARD TO ALL AGENCIES REPRESENTED ABROAD. (B) IT WAS AGREED THAT AID STAFFING REQUIRES CAREFUL CONTROL THROUGH MODE, BUT PANEL MEMBERS ALSO NOTED EQUALLY IMPORTANT PROBLEM AT SOME POSTS WITH KEY POSITIONS REMAINING UNFILLED. (C) WITH REGARD TO USIS, PANEL WELCOMED PROMISE OF RESIDENT PAO FOR SMALLER EMBASSIES, BUT EXPRESSED HOPE THESE ASSIGNMENTS WOULD BRING WITH THEM ADEQUATE USIS RESOURCES TO DO MEANINGFUL JOB. (D) ON PEACE CORPS, PANEL OFFERED THREE RECOMMENDATIONS:

(1) PCV'S SHOULD BE RECRUITED ONLY IN RESPONSE TO HOST GOVERNMENT REQUESTS, NOT TO MEET WASHINGTON QUOTAS.

(2) PCV'S ORIENTATION SHOULD STRESS FACT THEY ARE VIEWED BY HOST COUNTRY NATIONALS AS REPRESENTATIVES OF US.

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KEL PCV'S SHOULD BE INTEGRATED TO GREATEST POSSIBLE EXTENT IN AID OR UNDP DEVELOPMENT PROJECTS.

(E) WITH REFERENCE TO COMMERCIAL SERVICES, PANEL NOTED WIDE VARIATION FROM COUNTRY TO COUNTRY AND SUGGESTED THAT US FIRMS SHOULD OFTEN BE DISCOURAGED FROM SELLING FRINGE ITEMS IN POOR OR DEBT-BURDENED COUNTRIES DESPITE OUR OVERALL EXPORT DRIVE. USDOC ADVICE IN THESE CASES SHOULD BE AS PRUDENT AS THAT OFFERED BY EMBASSIES, AND WE SHOULD CONSIDER SEEKING EQUALLY RESPONSIVE POSTURE FROM OTHER WESTERN SUPPLIERS.
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Message Attributes

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Disposition Approved on Date:
Disposition Case Number: n/a
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